

## **Early Bird Sept. 22 – Oct. 5**

### **SAFETY/SECURITY**

#### **Gas leaks: Gas station was blocked (Oct. 5)**

On Tuesday at approximately 11:50 p.m. a gas-powered car with a leaking valve blocked a gas station and the surrounding area in the industrial area of Werneck. A driver from Berlin had filled up his car with 16.50 kilo natural gas. When he took out the hose he noticed that gas was coming out of the tank valve. He immediately put the pump back into the tank to stop the leakage. The gas station, as well as the street Am Eschenbach, was blocked by police patrols and the fire departments of Werneck and Grafenrheinfeld. Two wrecking services that were called to the scene were not able to seal the leak and the car had to be pushed away from the gas pump to let release the gas under controlled conditions. One and a half hours later the gas station was back in operation and some of the fire fighters were able to leave. At 4 a.m. the street was opened for traffic and more fire fighters were released. However, at 8:15 a.m., the police had the car towed off, since there was still gas leaking and the car could not be driven.

#### **Deadly traffic accident near Bamberg (Oct. 4-5)**

A tragic traffic accident on the A-73 near Bamberg poses a riddle. A 31-year old female ghost driver had a head-on collision with another vehicle. The 31-year old female ghost driver was killed, along with her seven-year old child and the driver of the oncoming-car. The woman driving on the wrong side of the Autobahn was nude. The accident claimed three lives and a 4-year old girl who sustained head injuries. The front seat passenger in the other car also sustained serious injuries. It is not known why the woman from Coburg was naked. A police spokesman from Bayreuth said, "We assume that she was in an exceptional psychical state." There are no indications that she was suicidal. There is nothing known about a fight with her husband from whom she is separated. However, the police confirmed a report published in the "Bildzeitung" which said the woman had a loud argument with her mother on Monday. The police officers who were called by neighbors assumed that the incident was harmless since both women calmed down before the police left. Forty-five minutes before the accident, the woman was seen nude at a gas station. There, she filled-up her gas tank and got a bottle of mineral water from the "Kiosk" without paying. She was shouting crazy things. The gas station attendant alarmed the police, but by the time they arrived the woman had already left in her car. The police are investigating to find out the circumstances leading to the tragedy.

#### **Almost all nuclear power plants have shortcomings (Oct. 2)**

The stress tests conducted on European nuclear power plants have such grave safety deficiencies that the European Energy Commissioner, Günther Oettinger, postponed the publication of the results, again. Apparently, the governments of the 14 European countries who have nuclear power plants should have the opportunity to see the results before they will be published for the public during the EU summit in mid-October. Oettinger said, "Our tests are strict, reputable and transparent. Now we know what we have to do to achieve highest security standards for example in case of an earthquake." And these are quite a few. Protection in case of earthquakes, missing emergency power supply, for example with diesel motors were reprimanded in the report. In practical in all power plants there are hundreds of technical improvements necessary which require investments of €10 to 25 billion. As a reaction to the accident at the Fukushima plant in Japan, the EU inspected all 145 nuclear reactors in Europe on safety standards. In Germany there were 12 facilities with 17 reactors. While a spokesman of the Federal Environmental Minister stated that the safety of German nuclear power plants in case of an earth quake has never been objected to, Brussels had different results. The automatic earth quake warning systems are insufficient. The guidelines for severe accidents directed by the International Atomic Energy Agency have never been implemented. The inspection of the reactors located in Fessenheim and Temelin revealed several severe

critique points. Representatives of Green Peace stated “this is only the tip of the iceberg.” The inspection shows that the nuclear industry is not very interested in safety.

## **LEADERS/POLITICS**

### **Town hall meeting: How can we prevent people to urinate in public areas? (Oct. 4)**

The bottom line in regard to the concerns voiced at the first town hall meeting held Tuesday night: We are all doing fine. Only the urinating in public places in downtown Schweinfurt seems to become a bigger problem, and mainly on weekends. A citizen of Kesslergasse stated that drunks, returning from a disco and roving about in the early morning hours, use house entrances to do their business. In addition, the noise from 3 to 4 in the morning is so loud, that residents are forced to wear ear plugs to sleep. Another resident from Krumme Gasse confirmed the unbearable noise level and also blamed those drunks for property damages in the area. The problem was confirmed by Chief of Police Detlef Tolle. On weekends after 1 .m. is the busiest time for the police. During the last Honky-Tonk Festival, there were so many rampages including urinating in public places after 3 a.m. that the closing time for festivals will be shortened in 2013. Another problem is that 20-year olds buy alcohol for 16-year olds. Therefore the civilian police patrols are on duty at any type of festivity. However; there is no patent remedy according to Tolle. He stated: “This is a challenge for the entire society”. He stated: “18.6% of all suspects are under the influence of alcohol – our number 1 problem.” But all together the number of offenses has reduced. As a solution, the city is thinking about keeping public toilets downtown Schweinfurt open longer—now they are closed at 2200.

### **Rainer Vogt, Chief Prosecutor retires – successor is Dr. Irene Singer (Sept. 28)**

On Thursday, Rainer Vogt has officially retired after 12 years as chief prosecutor at the District Court Schweinfurt and forty years serving in justice. His successor, Dr. Irene Singer, came from Aschaffenburg where she also held the position of chief prosecutor.

### **Military training area in good condition, future unknown (Sept. 27)**

The forest protection society recently visited the military training area near the U.S. Army training area known as “Brönnhof.” The area of nearly 3-square kilometers is used mainly by American troops for training of ground warfare. The visitors of the forest protection society saw a complete different picture than 10 years ago. During their visit 10 years ago, they saw a crater landscape. In the meantime, much has changed. Training with tanks is no longer performed and the efforts of the environmental office show success. Lothar Rückert, chief of the environmental office at the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt, showed the visitors an area similar to a park. Many surfaces are covered by grass and plants and provide habitats for small creatures. The former tank craters are filled with water and provide an additional valuable biotope. According to Rückert, the American leadership emphasizes an environmental friendly use of the area. The vehicles use mainly the fortified paths and tanks are no longer used. Also the problem with the water flowing from the area, which caused erosion and flooding, has been solved by specifically planting the edge regions. The participants of the excursion unanimously stated that the condition of the landscape had improved. What will happen with the area in the future after the drawdown of the U.S. Army is still not known—mainly because the release of the training area has not been decided.

### **City Division Heads facing re-election (Sept. 25)**

Without a dissenting vote the city council accepted the restructuring of the city divisions as suggested from the Lord Mayor and the personnel office. The occasion was the end of the office term for the division heads—fulltime members of the city council—in 2013. The unanimous “yes” was expected since the new organizational plan had passed the “Council of Elders” who the fraction leaders belong to, without a problem. There will be no changes in Division I (economic promotion, personnel, culture,

museums, theater, adult education center, library and city archives) headed by Lord Mayor Remele. Also no changes will occur in Division II (city finances, controlling and public affairs) headed by Martin Baldauf since 2000. The biggest changes will take place in the Divisions III and V. On 30 September 2013 the head of Division V (youth office, sport and schools), Jürgen Mainka, will retire. Social welfare office and job center will be added to this Division which was formerly included in Division III, headed by Jürgen Montag. Montag will remain as head of Division III (public order and security, registration office, statistics, registrar's office) added will be from Division V the city construction office and environmental matters. Division IV headed by Jochen Müller (city planning, civil engineering, building & grounds services) added from Division II will be the forestry office and the wild park. Jochen Müller will retire on 31 March 2014.

#### **New county commissioner in Schweinfurt (Sept. 24)**

The county of Schweinfurt will have a new Landrat on beginning Feb. 1, 2013. Florian Töpfer of the SPD/Green Party surprisingly prevailed over the incumbent Harald Leitherer. The result of the election is a sensation: Töpfer had 57.7% of the votes, Leitherer only 42.3 %. The voter participation was only 42.2%. Shaking his hand, Leitherer stated that Töpfer will take over a great team and he wishes him great success. Töpfer was surprised that he had the majority of the votes in almost all communities in the district. Leitherer only had the majority votes in 8 of 29 communities.

#### **Medal for Mayor Arthur Arnold of Euerbach (Sept. 23)**

The Mayor of Euerbach Arthur Arnold was presented the Medal for Merit for municipal employees in bronze. According to Government President Paul Beinhofer, the medal was bestowed for Arnold's special emphasize on the positive development of the community of Euerbach.

#### **Ten flying Dutchmen on Conn Barracks (Sept. 22)**

Hundreds of Dutch soldiers have "occupied" Conn Barracks as their commander Pier Schipmölter says tongue-in-cheek. They are part of the multinational NATO exercise "Peregrine Sword" which presently takes place in the Main-Rhön region as well as in Hesse and Thuringia with 6,500 participants. The main part of the exercise is done on the computer—a simulation of a war taking place in Africa. However, the Dutch helicopters are reality: They come in action to complement the scenario. Their mission is to transport ground forces and material into the combat areas, as Schipmölter explains. For example on Thursday, six Apache combat helicopters and four Chinook transport helicopters conducted their mission in the military training area Schwarzenborn in Hesse. Furthermore, the exercise offers the opportunity to train the rescue of wounded Soldiers. With the injured Soldiers the entire rescue chain is being trained ranging from first aid to the transport to military hospitals. "This is a great opportunity to train the rescue. We don't do this very often" said Schipmölter. There are also civilian rescue services involved which makes the training special. According to information from the Bundeswehr, this exercise is based on the founding of a special headquarters of the German-Netherlands Corps based in Münster. The mission of this Corps is to react to modern conflicts, where fighting the enemy is not the only mission but also the interaction from one service to another. The Corps is a unit which can be mobilized for the NATO or EU within days. According to Schipmölter, the purpose of the exercise is to synchronize and improve the cooperation between the multinational troops, which is required in missions such as in Afghanistan. During the exercise, the 11<sup>th</sup> Air Maneuver Brigade, based in Gilze-Rijn in Southern Netherlands, uses the infrastructure of the U.S. Army near Geldersheim, where they have been welcomed. The Dutch troops set-up a camp, including a large DFAC tent and their own airfield with tower and radio masts. There, the helicopters land to refuel. The Dutch even brought 2 fire trucks. Next to it is the heart of the operation, the operations center consisting of two dozen containers with high-tech equipment, which can only be accessed with a special ID. From there the flights are coordinated and the course of the mission is planned. Also included are 12 Bundeswehr Soldiers with two CH-53 transport helicopters to support their Dutch comrades. The Dutch helicopters will still take off from Geldersheim until next Friday (Sept. 28) then the exercise "Peregrine Sword" is concluded.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Railroad Company introduces first modernized intercity train (Oct. 5)**

The German railroad company introduced its first modernized intercity train in Hamburg. According to the company, 770 intercity compartments will be modernized by 2014. The compartments that are up to 40 years old will be furnished with new interior for which the railroad will invest approximately €250 million. With these modernizations the compartments should be good until 2023. When the time table is changed in December the rail road company plans to equip the intercity route Stuttgart-Köln-Hamburg with the modernized compartments.

## **HEALTH/WELLNESS**

### **Diarrhea – searching for the agent: 8,365 Students affected (Oct. 1)**

The recent surge in diarrhea and vomiting among children in East Germany is slowing down. The Robert Koch Institute reported on Sunday that the peak of recorded cases has been exceeded. After eating meals in schools and child care facilities, at least 8,365 children and youth as well as some adults in Brandenburg, Berlin, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia got sick. The cause of the ailments, however, has not been determined. The Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection stated that, according to the numbers released, there are clear signs that the worst is over. Affected were 342 schools and kindergartens. All were catered by the same company – Sodexo from Rüsselsheim in Hesse. The experts of the task force, which was established for this crisis, examined samples taken from food deliveries, checked menus and delivery routes are still waiting for laboratory results. In Saxony and Thuringia, there were indications that the ailments were caused by the highly contagious norovirus. However, experts assume that there are still other causes for the wave of infections. So far only 23 people had to be admitted to hospitals.